

DREAM Act is not amnesty. The DREAM Act is justice.

“Amnesty” is defined as a government pardon. But how can you be pardoned if you have done nothing wrong? These children followed their parents to a land of greater opportunity, having no choice and no say in how they arrived. They grew up here, went to school here, and now want to serve the United States.

But make no mistake, these students will not have it easy. They will have to work hard, wait an entire decade, and continue to prove they meet all of the criteria for a green card, much less citizenship. They must pay back taxes, be able to read, write, and speak English, and show knowledge of the United States.

And when they have done all of that, they will finally be allowed to pursue their dreams. That is justice—the American way.

PASS DREAM ACT

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, before I start, I would like to express my deepest sympathy to the family of Elizabeth Edwards, who passed today, a woman who I got to know and who I admire greatly. I wish for her family loving memories, and I offer publicly my deepest sympathies.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remind Members of what opportunity means in this country. Opportunity is focused in many ways: equality and justice, First Amendment rights, that you can find in the Constitution in some way. But education is also an opportunity and a right in this country.

I rise today to support the DREAM Act so that millions of children who've lived in this country, speak the language, many of them served in the United States military, who are seeking a simple education can do so and then, in turn, invest some \$1 trillion in contributions to America.

I speak today in tribute to Ms. Martinez, who is on a 28-day hunger strike, from San Antonio, Texas. Ms. Martinez, I hope, in your name, that we will pass the DREAM Act, because you have been willing to sacrifice. We should pass the DREAM Act.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members are reminded that Members should address their remarks to the Chair and not to the television audience.

□ 1900

A SETBACK FOR A PALESTINIAN STATE

(Mr. ENGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the actions of the Governments of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay for recognizing Palestine as an independent state before there are conclusive negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians.

The Prime Minister of Israel gave a 10-month moratorium on any kind of building of additional settlements or houses or anything like that in exchange for talking with the Palestinians. The Palestinians waited 9 months and didn't talk. In the 10th month, they talked, and now it ran out, and the Palestinians are again placing preconditions and are refusing to talk. The Palestinians must know that a peace agreement with Israel is the only way they can have their Palestinian state. It can't be done unilaterally.

What Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay did, I think, has set back rather than enhanced the negotiations for a two-state solution, which I support. This is something that was wrong and that should be condemned. It gives the Palestinians no incentive to sit down and talk with Israel and bargain in good faith.

A GDP SPENDING CAP

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, most Americans are looking at the events in Ireland, Spain and Greece with interest and horror when we look at how they are grappling with the problem of their national debts. Yet, at the same time, the United States of America has a debt which is 96 percent of GDP. Our spending level is about 24 percent of GDP.

Now, most States around the country have balanced budget amendments which keep them from going in the red. What a different picture it would be if our national government had a balanced budget amendment. There is another thing we could do, though, and that would be to modernize the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, which calls for deficit reduction targets.

I think, however, it would be better to have a spending cap tied into GDP at approximately 18 percent, which would, year after year, give Congress a target. If we were to fail to meet that target, then it would have an automatic trigger of across-the-board cuts so that we could get to the right level of spending. We do not want to have the same problems as Greece, Ireland and Spain.

MAKE THE DREAM ACT A REALITY

(Mr. HONDA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, as chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific Amer-

ican Caucus, I urge my colleagues to support the DREAM Act this week.

Failure to pass the DREAM Act would disproportionately impact the 1.5 million Asian students in our country. Hardworking and high-achieving students like Soo Ji Lim and Steve “Shing Ma” Li have overcome numerous barriers in their lives and are now on track to finish college.

These students already contribute to our country, and we owe them a chance at the American Dream. We must act, and we must make the DREAM Act a reality for students like them. It is a good investment. Let's get a return on the investment.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KISSELL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN AND NO DEFINITION OF “VICTORY”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I have to my side the faces of marines who have given their lives for this country. They are from Camp Lejeune, which is in the district I represent. These are the faces of those young men and women who gave their lives for this country.

I come to the floor today because I join the American people. I am very concerned about committing our troops to 4 more years in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a vast country. It has never been a nation. It doesn't have a government, and we are trying to build a government in Afghanistan. I want to share just a couple of comments. This is from The Washington Examiner.

It reads: “Catch-and-Release of Taliban fighters in Afghanistan angers troops.”

“More than 500 suspected Taliban fighters detained by United States forces have been released from custody at the urging of Afghan Government officials, angering both American troops and some Afghans who oppose the policy on the grounds that many of those released return to the battlefield to kill NATO soldiers and Afghan civilians.”

Recently, on November 28 of this year, there was a “60 Minutes” segment by Anderson Cooper. It was called “Good Cop, Bad Cop: Afghanistan's National Police.” I want to read just a couple of excerpts from this: